

**Dining and Wining ...
Where To Go ...
Where Not To Go**

**THE BEST
RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...
AND THE WORST !**

Name of Restaurant

Bella Vita

Address of Restaurant

11/F, Cubus Plaza, No. 1, Hoi Ping Road, Causeway, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Monday, June 20, 2011

Category**TARGETs Rating****Service**

First Impression	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Attentiveness to Customers' Needs	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Flexibility	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Product Expertise of Serving Staff	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Speed of Service	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Cleanliness of Uniform and Serving Staff	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Ambiance

Lighting	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Music -- None	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
General	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Food

Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Wine

Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier	Excellent	Acceptable	None

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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Name of Restaurant Manager

Mr Angelo D'Eramo

Name of Chef

Mr Francesco Pasquini

Comments

This stand-alone eatery is not easy to find, unless one lives in Causeway Bay on Hongkong Island, or one has been introduced to Restaurant Bella Vita by a friend, but it is well worth a visit.

Bella Vita is located on the 11th Floor of a commercial building with the name of Cubus, tucked into Number One, Hoi Ping Road.

TARGET () visited this stand-alone restaurant, last Monday night at about 8:15 pm and, after studying the menu and the sparse wine list, ordered the following:

*Fettucine Salla Coda alla "Vaccinara" e Pecorino Romano
(Homemade Fettuccine
with Ox-Tail Ragout and "Romano" Pecorino Cheese)
\$HK248*

*Risotto Porcini, Zafferano e Fiori di Zucca
(Saffron Risotto
with Porcine Mushrooms and Zucchini Flowers)
\$HK268*

*Branzino al Sale Mario, Vino Bianco, Tartufo Nero
Asparagi Grigliati al Sale Maldon Affumicati
(Baked Whole Seabass
under Sea Salt with White Wine and Black Truffle,
Grilled Asparagus with Smoked Maldon Salt)
\$HK380*

*Cheese Plate
\$HK138*

*Tiramisu "Bella Vita"
\$HK88*

*Panna Cotta all' Antica Con Miele di Castagno
(Old Fashion Panna Cotta with Chestnut Honey)
\$HK78*

With the above, **TARGET**, also, ordered a bottle of Pomino Benefizio, Marchesi de Frescobaldi 2007 at \$HK460.

It was an excellent choice of wine with the above dishes.

On scanning the above menu, one cannot help but note that the cost of the food at this Italian restaurant, with Executive Chef Francesco Pasquini, personally taking charge of the food orders, is not cheap, but the quality of the produce and the expertise, demonstrated in the kitchen, makes it worth the money.

In fact, **TARGET** would go further to suggest that this restaurant, which seats only 50 patrons, rivals many would-be food

outlets at some of the best, 5-star hotels in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

If any criticism could be considered valid, it would be that the lack of soft furnishings can make the restaurant a very noisy place since loud talking and occasional guffaws from patrons, reverberates throughout this smallish eatery.

The Food

The first 2 courses, Fettucine Salla Coda alla "Vaccinara" e Pecorino Romano and Risotto Porcini, Zafferano e Fiori di Zucca, were, simply put, Heaven on plates.

Both dishes were freshly cooked and the timing by the kitchen staff was spot on.

With pasta dishes, even if the raw ingredients are the best that money can buy, wrong timing at the cooking stage can easily ruin everything in a shot.

The main course, the Branzino al Sale Mario, Vino Bianco, Tartufo Nero Asparagi Grigliati al Sale Maldon Affumicati, was, without question, the handiwork of somebody in the kitchen who well knew the art of cooking a fresh fish.

The problem with this dish was that the wild sea bass was a little too small to 2 persons, but, other than this criticism, all that one could state about this dish was that it was excellent.

Of course, comparing Hongkong's version of this dish with that of Rimini, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea, it does not compete too well. This is due to the fact that Hongkong has to import all the raw produce from Europe if a cook wants to try to emulate the original flavours of Italy.

The other dishes were good, but nothing particularly special. The cheese board could easily be improved and, as for the desserts, well, Italy is not known for its ability to produce outstanding desserts.

The Service

The serving staff tries very hard to please patrons, but with regard to some of the senior staff, they tend to be a little officious, with the best intentions in the world, no doubt.

Because this restaurant is constructed on the plan of an open kitchen design, sealed from the dining room by a transparent, heavy glass window, all of the dishes are served right out of the smallish kitchen.

Due to the size of Bella Vita, negotiating down the single narrow aisle can be difficult for the serving staff, but they seem to overcome this problem with ease.

This restaurant opened last December and, last Monday, it was about half empty (or half full, whichever description one prefers).

The Restaurant Manager is Mr Angelo D'Eramo, who said that he was taught English in Birmingham, England, so that some of his English pronunciations are difficult to understand, such as 'hoven', meaning 'oven'.

Other than this, he is quite a character.

All in all, this restaurant, today, stands as an excellent venue to take somebody who appreciates good cooking, but one must be prepared to part with a chunk of change in so doing.

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